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ABSTRACT

The Ways to Improve Schools and Education (WISE) Project sought to enhance school productivity by more effective use of community resources. WISE worked with three sites: Albuquerque, New Mexico; Austin, Texas; and Oklahoma City, in 1983-84. In 1985, three more sites were added: Little Rock, Arkansas; Jackson, Mississippi; and New Orleans, Louisiana. At each site a Liaison Team (LT) was organized consisting of representatives from the school district, a collaborating business or chamber of commerce, an institution of higher education; the state education agency, and the Southwest Educational Laboratory. Project WISE accomplished the following: (1) assisted with the establishment and implementation of collaborative activities at the six sites; (2) interacted with other partnerships in the United States; (3) reviewed pertinent literature; (4) shared information among its sites; and (5) conducted working conferences of its LTs. Project WISE and its LTs produced Models and Guidelines for Partnerships in Education. These operational Models and Guidelines are experience-based, research-based, and operational in translating research into practice. (JD)

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY OF THE FINAL REPORT: WAYS TO IMPROVE SCHOOLS AND EDUCATION THROUGH EDUCATION - COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIPS

Prepared by

Al King, Ph.D.

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Division of Family, School and Community Studies
David L. Williams, Jr., Director

Preston C. Kronkosky, Executive Director
Southwest Educational Development Laboratory
Austin, Texas

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I. INTRODUCTION

Collaboration between schools and the private sector is not new, but only recently has there been significant focus on school-private sector partnerships to improve the general quality of public education. Most business contributions to schools have instead been piecemeal. These were in the form of executives doing voluntary consulting work, funding other consultants or short-term programs for students, and, most often, providing funds, advice, and course-related job experience for career and/or vocational education courses.

That most of the literature on school-business relationships discusses career and/or vocational education and the transition of youth from school to work, reveals the emphasis that has been placed on collaborative efforts in the past. And, by far, most of the business assistance for education has gone, and still goes, to higher education. But the recent emphasis on school improvement has caused schools and their communities to seek new resources to enrich education.

The Ways to Improve Schools and Education (WISE) Project has sought to enhance school productivity by more effective use of community resources to meet school needs. As a means of accomplishing this, WISE has developed models and guidelines that are promoting collaboration among schools, businesses/chambers of commerce, other community organizations, state education agencies, and higher education agencies.

One focus of Project WISE has been to enhance school staff knowledge and skills through partnerships efforts that provide for staff development and inservice education. This training can be provided by or adapted from business and industry or other local resources.

After carrying out needs sensing activities in 1982, Project WISE saw a need for examining and pilot testing of school business/community partnership efforts in the six-state region of the Southwest Educational Development Laboratory (Arkansas, Louisiana, Mississippi, New Mexico; Oklahoma, and Texas). The National Institute of education funded WISE to work with three sites, Albuquerque, Austin, and Oklahoma City from 1983 through 1985. Three more sites, Little Rock, Jackson, and New Orleans, were added in 1985.

Project WISE has conducted pilot testing of collaborative school-business partnership efforts in the six sites. At each site, a Liaison Team has been organized, consisting of representatives from the school district, a collaborating business or chamber of commerce, and institution of higher education, the state education agency, and

the Southwest Educational Development Laboratory. Project WISE's role involved (1) assisting with the establishment and implementation of collaborative activities at the six pilot sites, (2) interacting with other school-business projects in the United States, (3) reviewing relevant literature, (4) sharing information among its sites, and (5) conducting two-day working conferences of its Liaison Teams.

Project WISE site Liaison Teams have accomplished the following: (1) identified and prioritized issues in school-business collaboration, (2) drafted guidelines to resolve these issues, (3) developed Context and Strategic Models for implementing collaboration, (4) wrote conclusions supporting the importance of education and private sector collaboration to improve schools being a viable concept beneficial to the school, community, and the nation, with liaison teams as an effective means of facilitating this collaboration, and (5) recommended further activities to facilitate improved education-community partnerships.

During 1984 the Project WISE Models and Guidelines were:

- o reviewed by qualified consultants, including experienced directors of partnership projects;
- o tested at school sites;
- o revised in the light of the reviewer's recommendations and the information obtained by site tests;
- o reviewed by Project WISE Liaison Teams at its Working Conference.

Additional information about school and business/community collaborative activities has been collected from the literature along with other projects inside and outside the region as well as from the Liaison Teams at all six sites. Project WISE brought the six Liaison Teams together in working conferences at each site along with other practitioners to share ideas, improve their programs, and enhance the Project's Models and Guidelines.

There is no one best way to design and implement partnerships. But research-based operational models and guidelines can help local groups and organizations collaborate more effectively in organizing and carrying out a partnership based on their community's conditions and school needs. When completed in 1985, the Project WISE Models and Guidelines for Partnerships in Education will represent a translation of research into practice. They are intended as a practical tool to facilitate effective school-community partnerships that help meet school needs.

II. COST AND BENEFITS

Education pays off; it is the cost of neglect that is expensive. One study has estimated that "illiteracy costs our society over $12 billion per year--in lost production, in welfare, in prison costs, and in our social services" (American Association of School Administrators [AASA], 1984). In reports gathered by Project WISE from its own six projects and from others across the U.S., it is clear that there exist school-private sector collaborative efforts which are cost-effective. The costs of these partnerships are relatively small when compared with their benefits.

Depending on the nature of the project and available resources, the amount of funding varies from project to project. Also when considering the amount of funding needed for a project, the suggestion of a principal with a Virginia high school's successful education-private sector initiative could be useful: there is a danger that if school-community partnerships are viewed exclusively in monetary terms, the projects might be rebuffed for economic reasons. Then the truly valuable benefits would never be realized (Elliott, April 1983).

Although some benefits may take a year or more to be realized, in a well planned and implemented partnership, the morale and mutual understanding of the school and private sector people begin increasing almost immediately. Some of the immediate benefits have been shown in a report of a collaborative project involving schools and the Rexnord Corporation. Some of the results, reported soon after the Rexnord program began in 1976, included the following:

- Supervisors and teachers became supportive of each other's work.
- Teachers gained new resources for their classrooms and discovered the human aspects of business, as business people better understood the problems of education.
- The company developed links with an important element of the community and improved the business's public relations.
- Company employees gained new respect for teachers and students and also discovered the interdependency of business and education (Rexnord, 1983).

There are numerous other benefits--for students and schools, the community, business, labor and the nation. Some are listed in the sections that follow.

A. Students and School Benefits

Collaborative community efforts can bring important resources to

schools (e.g., additional expertise, material, equipment, and human resources) that otherwise would not be brought to bear on the needs of students and schools. If effectively conceived, planned, and implemented, education-community partnerships can provide the following benefits to students and schools:

- Increased student literacy and competence.
- Better student understanding of basic skills use in business
- More student and teacher challenges from new ideas.
- More informed students regarding careers in business and other community organizations.
- Better student understanding and appreciation of relationships between school and total lifestyle patterns.
- Improved student attitudes toward work as a valuable part society.
- Increased student motivation for learning school subject matter.
- Better student understanding of occupational interdependence
- More diversified set of student opportunities for career exploration.
- Better informed student and teacher consumers.
- Improved teacher morale.
- More efficient school operations through use of business management techniques.
- Increased educator awareness regarding the business point of view on key issues.
- Better understanding by the community of student and school problems and needs.

B. Community Benefits

People who do not have basic academic skills cannot fully participate in society. One study estimates that citizens without adequate basic skills earn $4,000 less per year than their counterparts who have those skills. Functional illiteracy may be responsible for as much as $6.7 billion in social programs and $6 billion in lost production each year (AASA, 1984).

Local Chambers of Commerce have found that a strong public school system is one of the greatest assets in recruiting new businesses to settle in their communities. The educational system is one of the key factors in any company's decision to relocate (AASA, 1984). A community perceived as having inadequate schools is less attractive to businesses and may suffer from a diminishing tax base.

Major benefits of effective school-private sector partnerships to the community include the following:

- Better informed and educated citizenry.
- Increased support for the school system.
- Improved school response to community needs.
- Development of improved cooperation among community leaders.
- Strengthened community stability.
- Increased community tax base.
- Enhanced quality of life.

C. Business Benefits

The partnership that a business establishes with the schools is an investment that can provide the private sector with great returns. Often business firms consider their work with schools as a means of discharging their community public service responsibility (NSPRA, 1980, p. 9). Major benefits to the company and its employees include the following:

- Equal employment opportunities increase.
- Educators and students make more informed public policy decisions affecting business.
- Decline in on-the-job training needs.
- Improved employee morale as they and their company become involved in meeting school needs.
- Better organized and more visible employees' volunteer efforts.
- More corporate influence on use of their taxes to support better schools.
- Better understanding of business projects, services, and policies.

- Enhanced company images.

- Better educated and qualified workforce for businesses in an information/technological world.

D. Labor Union Benefits

Organized labor is concerned about community welfare as well as that of its own members. Labor unions also are concerned about the image of labor that young people obtain through the mass media and their schooling. According to one report on work, fewer than one character in 10 on television is a blue-collar worker, and these few are usually portrayed with undesirable social traits (NSPRA, 1980). The literature indicates that collaborative relationships among labor, education agencies, and the corporate world enhances the public image of unions, and promotes a better match with regard to preparation for present and future jobs. Major benefits of school-community partnerships include the following:

- Enhanced labor linkages with community colleges and higher education adult education program.

- Increased quality and quantity of apprenticeship program.

- Enhanced technical and scientific literacy of the workforce.

- Decreased unemployment due to more job openings for union members and potential members.

- Better understand the role of unions in collective bargaining, facilitating access to jobs, and providing healthier working conditions by the community and especially young people.

E. National Benefits

Education-private sector collaboration accrue benefits for the nation as well as students, schools, community, businesses, and labor unions. Clearly, as the elements of society benefit, the nation as a whole benefits as well. But there are more specific ways in which the nation's interests are served. As students become better informed about interrelationships among the pieces of society, they grow into better informed adult citizens more capable of making decisions about issues for which they will have increasing responsibility.

Well informed, educated citizens foster the production of reliable goods and services which contribute to local, state, community, and national economies. The Brookings Institution credits

education as being the primary factor in the economic growth of the United States in the last 50 years (Education Daily, August 27, 1984). It states further:

- A healthier national economy contributes significantly to the success of the United States in the increasingly interrelated international economy.

- The national defense is enhanced, as the U. S. population becomes not only more literate, but more literate in science, mathematics, and technology, which helps prepare a defense force that can develop and operate increasingly complex weapons systems.

The most important benefits to the nation, however, are probably incalculable ones. More specifically, the expanded abilities and horizons of individuals who can achieve a sense of self worth and an ability to interact postively with each other.

III. PROJECT WISE MODELS AND GUIDELINES

Most benefits come from successful collaborative efforts, and not all are successful. School-business collaborative efforts are not easy to implement. Partnerships require people to work together. These will be people from different sectors and most likely be of different cultural, economic, social, and educational backgrounds. Success is often an elusive commodity, dependent here on the personality of the actors, there on the amount of funding, or on a constellation of completely different elements somewhere else. A partnership's motivation, goals, structure, resources, and participants can vary greatly from one successful effort to another. But these collaborative efforts do have one theme in common, and that is to help improve the quality of the community's schools.

The "Models and Guidelines for Partnerships in Education" are intended to foster that theme, but do not propose any one best way to design, organize, and implement education-community partnerships. There is no one best way. Studies of school-community collaborative efforts indicate that a great variety of local conditions make locally tailored partnerships necessary and desirable, not only for each school district, but for each school. We can, however, learn from the mistakes and successes of previous partnerships. One of the things we can learn, is that it is not efficient just to get enough good and sincere school and community people together and work them hard enough to improve their schools. Their efforts are far more productive if there are some structure and guidelines to facilitate an effective process. This is the purpose of the WISE Models and Guidelines, to facilitate the process of using local resources effectively.

Resources contributed to the schools can include funds, equipment, materials, meeting space, and people's time, experience, skills, and expertise. If they meet a specific need, the material contributions are important, and some funding may be essential. But, it is the human resource that really makes good things happen for students and schools. Sometimes the good outcomes are anticipated; sometimes they come unexpectedly, when one good thing just grows from another. This can be described as synergy, when two, or more, parts interact in such a way to produce a total effect that is greater than the sum of the parts. This does not seem to happen with volunteered "things," it happens when people act together to achieve a common goal. Research-based and experience-based models and guidelines can help collaborating groups work more efficiently and effectively, even synergistically.

It seems apparent that more schools and business would enter partnerships with each other if they had guidelines and models for effective collaborative efforts. Unless such models and guidelines are readily available, school and private sector partnerships may be perceived by educators as "very difficult and time-consuming" (Loucks-Horsley, 1984).

The general trend of school-business collaboration literature during the 1980's has been to become broader rather than deeper. Common themes throughout the literature of the 1980's are: (1) the need to initiate additional collaborative project, and (2) the need for more information with regard to making such efforts more effective. In other words, more is being written about the need and potential of such cooperative school improvement enterprises (as examples: Boyer, 1983 and Ruffin, 1983) than is written about how to implement them.

Some of the recent literature has provided depth. Michael Timpane (February 1984), for example, examines the rationale for business's "rediscovering" the public schools and suggests what problems and opportunities this may present. David S. Seeley (1984) also discusses some of the issues that educators must face and suggests some ways to resolve them. Recent case studies of local school-business partnerships provide information that should be useful for avoiding and/or solving problems related to collaboration (Green and Brede, 1983). The most detailed descriptions of partnerships for school improvement are the reports of local projects (for example, Greater Cincinnati Chamber of Commerce, 1982-83. 1983-84).

A nation-wide "School-Community Partnerships" study by the Kettering Foundation indicated that the problem of isolation with respect to collaborative efforts was not peculiar to the SEDL region. A report of the kettering study concluded that there was, in fact, little if any contact among the persons from various communities actively involved in organizing and maintaining

school-business collaborations, and there was no framework in existence for facilitating such exchanges (Kettering Foundation, 1984).

Nevertheless, Project WISE efforts have resulted in a set of Models and Guidelines for implementing school-community partnerships designed to meet school needs. These Models and Guidelines are flexible enough to assist partnerships regardless of their purpose or configuration, and yet specific enough to assist with identifiable aspects of any school-community collaborative process. The Project WISE the Models and Guidelines appear to be unique in the nation, i.e., the first of their kind to be comprehensive, flexible, and based on practice as well as theory. They fill the gap the Kettering Foundation study uncovered.

The full "Project WISE Models and Guidelines for Partnerships in Education" are available from the Southwest Educational Development Laboratory. A brief overview of the "Context Model," and "Issues and Guidelines" are included here.

A. WISE Context Model

Every collaboration is an innovation. Even if the persons involved have had other experiences together or experiences in similar circumstances, the creation of any different constellation of actors and purposes engages everyone in something new, in change.

Research on the implementation of innovations indicates two major conclusions: (1) that change is a complex interplay of four elements, and (2) that the people involved in change do not remain static during the experience, but move through several stages of concern about the innovation in which they are participating (Hall & Loucks, 1977, 1978). The elements of change which researchers have noted are that change is clearly a process rather than an event; that it is made by individuals first, then institutions; that it is a highly personal experience for those involved; and that it entails developmental growth in the feelings and skills of participants. Thus, research indicates, the implementation of new ideas or projects, such as collaborative arrangements, must be tailored to the people involved rather than to the innovation itself. Unless the concerns of the people are acknowledged and their energy harnessed, the innovation more than likely will fail.

Not surprisingly, the first reaction participants in an innovation have, once they have complete information about it, is, "How will it affect me?" This early stage of concern will, when answered in a way that assures benefit, eventually develop into stages less concerned with the self and more towards others. These stages include a concern about managing time and materials related to the innovation; comprehending the consequences of the change on the people it will affect; relating what is happening to others

interested in the same thing; and finally, looking at ways to improve the innovation, to make it work even better. At every stage, however, the individual is still at the center of the concern; only the person's perspective enlarges to a broader context. Clearly, then, people are the most important element in any change process and are the focus of the context in which collaborative arrangements not only take place, but, more importantly, succeed.

Awareness of the importance of the human dimension is only the first step, however. There are four essential elements which make up a context conducive to successful collaboration. In each of these, the personal stage of concern comes into play. Each element should be considered by potential collaborators before they act, and must be securely in place to increase the opportunity for success. Often, failures in collaborative arrangements occur after participants have agreed to take part, when follow-through and maintenance should occur but do not. These failures occur because, unless participants understand the entire context of the project, and unless they are comfortable with it, they cannot know with certainty where it will lead or if it is worth their time and effort; they can agree in principle but not in action.

The four conditions which form the context for successful collaboration are:

1. shared or overlapping goals;

2. community resources to meet school needs;

3. a mechanism for the exchange and application of the resources; and

4. evaluation and feedback about results to the partners involved in the collaboration.

These conditions and the Guidelines for developing them are discussed in the Project WISE Models and Guidelines for Partnerships in Education.

B. Issues and Guidelines

A large measure of the significance of the Models and Guidelines lies in the issues and questions they address. These issues and questions were raised by Liaison Team members and were culled from the Project's information data base during the last three years. They include the most frequently asked questions and the knottiest problems faced by individuals involved in collaboration efforts. These issues, upon which the Guidelines are based, are listed below:

1) How to identify needs of schools?
   How to assess and prioritize the individual needs of each school in the program?

2) How to identify resources?
What private sector organization has the means of fulfilling the needs of the school?

3) How to get funding?
How to locate and obtain funding that is helpful to starting and maintaining a project or program?

4) How to obtain resources other than funding?
How to get direct access to awareness, knowledge, and skills needed by school staffs and students?

5) How to match needs with resources?
What is the most efficient way to fit needs with appropriate remedies?

6) How to facilitate "exchange mechanisms?"
How will the resources, such as knowledge and skills, be delivered to those who have needs?

7) How to establish control?
At what level? By whom? How?

8) How to get people to "buy into the system?"
What are the benefits of collaboration?

9) How to involve and get the support of students?
If it is important for students to support the program, how do you go about it?

10) How to involve parents/community?
How to get support nd involvement of people needed to help make the program work?

11) How to decide who will be linker/facilitator?
Who will have the ultimate responsibility to make the program work?

12) How to deal with problems of "turf?"
How to avoid or solve disputes that are likely to arise over territoriality?

13) How to develop leadership from all sectors?
Who will develop support needed by the facilitator?

14) How to eliminate misconceptions?
How to overcome negative stereotypes that schools and the corporate world are likely to have about each other?

15) How to establish trust?
How to obtain the trust that is essential to collaboration?

16) How to sell mutuality?
How to assure collaborators that the program is equitable, that they are not giving too much with regard to benefits?

17) How to maintain relationships once started?
How to keep momentum that may be generated at the launching of the program?

18) How to institutionalize the process of collaboration?
How to make the partnership an integral part of school improvement efforts?

19) How to expand and maintain continuity?
How to prevent a project's "getting out of control" while it develops?

20) How to deal with time and extra load?
How to overcome the problem of busy people becoming even busier?

21) How to prevent burnout/boredom?
How to keep morale high among people who are essential to the program?

22) How to evaluate, measure effects,and give feedback?
How to assess process and products to terminate or improve the program?

23) How to establish a climate to promote public education-private sector partnerships to help meet the needs of LEAs?

What needs to be done to help Project WISE sites and other communities obtain more benefits from school-business collaboration?

These issues and guidelines for resolving them are arranged and discussed in four developmental phases in the WISE Models and Guidelines. These phases are: (1) Getting Started, (2) Implementation, (3) Sustaining Interest and Momentum, and (4) Evaluation.

C. Strategic Model

Collaboration is a process, not an event. As such, collaborations involve many individuals in separate actions which, taken together over time, should result in the achievement of a common goal. The WISE Project's Strategic Model for Education-Community Partnerships is a map of this process, a flexible system designed to show the synergistic relationships among the various actions necessary to reach a desired outcome. It is also designed to allow colla-

borators to assess the value of each action as it relates to another so that the emphasis to be placed on each can be calculated in advance.

The Strategic Model for Education-Community Partnerships is based on certain assumptions about process. These assumptions have led to the categorizations of actions named in the model. The first assumption is that a central need will lead to the use of education-community partnerships as an approach to meet that need. If there are several goals which the participants have, the need may arise from the area where these goals overlap. Or there may be one clear need about which all participants agree and from which there is no diversion. In any event, all participants should be certain about the primary need for which a collaboration has been deemed the appropriate approach.

The second assumption is that there are many ways of carrying out the collaborative project to meet the need. These can be categorized as major and minor, or as sets and subsets, or in this case, as strategies and methods. For the most part, strategies are the more global of the two, the generic road participants want to travel to reach their common destination. Methods are the specific ways each strategy will be accomplished. At each juncture, the map becomes a bit more detailed as the activities are delineated.

IV. MAJOR CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The work of Project WISE staff and the Liaison Teams from its six sites has led to the formulation of several significant conclusions and recommendations. The Project's work has generally centered on five functions: (1) the study of school/business/community collaborative efforts in six sites; (2) the creation and maintenance of Liaison Teams at each site whose members cross job roles and interest areas; (3) the facilitation of communication and cooperation among these sites to further their efforts; (4) the consequent creation and encouragement of a network of individuals (and the groups they are associated with) that can strengthen individual efforts through collective support and information-sharing; and (5) the development, testing, and refining of models and guidelines for partnerships in education, which, having been drawn from the experiences of these six sites, can provide directions for others where little has previously existed.

1. Conclusions

As a result of this work, the most significant conclusions Project WISE staff and the Liaision Team members have reached is simple, yet important:

Education and private sector collaboration is a viable concept and worthy of implementation. Further, school and community

partnerships can improve schools throughout the SEDL region and the nation, and can benefit all partners.

School-business collaborative efforts are not, as we know, simple to implement. They are nearly as varied in complexity, purpose, and outcomes as they are numerous. The conclusion above is based on the implementation of successful collaborative efforts. Success, as we know, is often an elusive commodity, dependent here on the personality of the actors, there on the amount of funding, or on a constellation of completely different elements somewhere else. Nevertheless, the experiences of Project WISE staff and its liaision team members have resulted in certain conclusions about what ingredients are necessary for successful collaborations. These conclusions have been assimilated into a separate Project document, "Models and Guidelines for Partnerships in education," but can also be stated in more general terms below:

It is important for school-business partnerships to: (1) develop and maintain momentum; (2) generate good public relations; through the media and other appropriate means; (3) be a part of a network for sharing information; and (4) provide orientation and training to everyone involved in the partnerships. Further conclusions are:

- The liaison team approach appears to be an effective means of faciitating school-business collaboration.

- The use of primarily local funds and local people leads partners buy into it more quickly and "own it and share it."

- Grant funds from a non-local source, such as a private foundation, can be helpful in establishing and/or maintaining an effective program.

- Outside" funds can be used without compromising the positive benefits of school-business cooperation, especially when the control and management are local and collaborative.

- Public schools should seek and utilize all resources which are available for developing school/business partnerships.

- The private sector has knowledge and skills which are readily transferrable to and usable for schools through inservice education.

- Staff development/inservice education for the collaborators is probably necessary for more effective collaboration.

- The collaborative team should include representatives from an institute of higher education, the school or district, business or chamber of commerce, and state education agency,

as well as from other public agencies or private organizations.

- Models, such as the Project WISE "Context Model" and "Strategic Model," are necessary for effective and cost efficient collaboration.

- Guidelines, based on the experiences of other education/private sector activities, can be of critical importance to teams who are planning and implementing school/business collaboration efforts.

- Interaction between school/business teams at different sites is useful for enhancing guidelines and for gaining new ideas and insights concerning the implementation of education-private sector cooperative activities.

- Interaction between members of different site teams, as in a working conference, is helpful in implementing school-business collaboration efforts.

- Other than through WISE, there is little if any exchange of information being specifically promoted or conducted between/among collaboration projects.

2. Recommendations

Liaison Team members made several specific recommendations to Project WISE as a result of their work and the conclusions they reached. These include the following:

- If vocational and/or career education programs are successful, consideration should be given to building on that success as a means of expanding school-business collaboration.

- If there are cohesive labor unions in or near the school district, consideration should be given to including them as a partner in school-business collaboration efforts.

- If the school or business has a committee or office for volunteer services, consideration should be given to including it in S-B C activities.

- There must be opportunities to share information about education-private sector collaboration with other districts and with other schools in these districts.

- Disseminate information about school-business collaboration to other states, school districts, and potentially collaborative businesses in the SEDL region and the nation.

- Continue to promote and nourish the liaison team concept at education-private sector sites.

- Sites which are planning/implementing school-business collaboration activities should hold a conference where members of various site teams can interact to produce insights and ideas which will be useful in helping the sites achieve their goals. If possible, one or more sites which have had successful school-business collaboration experiences should be included in the conference.

- Project WISE should become a national or regional center for information and technical assistance to assist more sites in the development and implementation of education-private sector activities.

- Assist in obtaiing funding for staffing collaboration teams in school districts throughout the region.

- Formalize the network system begun by Project WISE region wide.
- Special efforts should be made to establish a climate for more education-private sector collaboration.

- Encourage businesses, civic organizations, etc. to ask themselves: "What can we do to help education?"

- Encourage schools to become more "open" in their approach to education.

- Look at more innovative ways to assess projects and communicate successes (and failures) to constituents.

- Assistance should be provided to schools and other S-B C participants to obtain funding for projects.

- Video tape working conferences, then use the tapes to introduce more people to the work of Project WISE and its LTs.

- Develop a director of commuities involved in school/business partnerships with names of contact persons, addresses, and telephone numbers.

- Update and synthesize the existing information base and refine it for use with intermediary organizations and potential school-business partnerships. Publish results.

- Identify and describe promising examples and practices of school-business partnerships in the region. Publish results, categorized by goals, demographics, location, and other key criteria.

- Collaborate with representatives of targeted state-level organizations, associations, and agencies to develop, expand, and maintain support networks among school-business partnerships for exchanging information about the availability of resources and services from SEDL and others.

- Provide information about promising characteristics of school-business partnerships to representatives of targeted state level associations, organizations, and agencies, and share information with school-business partnerships through these representatives.

- Prepare and distribute to state-level decision-makers information about examples and activities of promising school-business partnerships and networks in the region.

SEDL will take these conclusions and recommendations into account as it proceeds with work for 1986 and beyond.

V. SIGNIFICANCE OF THE WISE MODELS AND GUIDELINES

A. Practitioners as Integral Parts of Development Teams

The creation and maintenance of there six existing Liaison Teams are results of Project WISE staff's belief in the importance of human as well as material resources and the principals of human resource develop and organizational development to foster effective school/business partnerships. Teams of chambers of commerce, state education agencies, higher education agencies, and SEDL, have had the opportunity--in some cases for the first time--to come together to discuss their concerns about and goals for educational improvement in their own communities with a varied sample of people from that community.

Thus, the liaison team concept has provided an important opportunity for a variety of viewpoints to be shared. The liaison team approach has also given the individuals involved a sense of identity as a member of a team working toward a common goal. It has, thus, reduced the sense of isolation that can occur when individuals, or even groups belonging to one segment of a community, seek to cause change without the assistance, support, or even awareness regarding the existence of other "like-minded people."

Further, Project WISE has provided the Liaison Teams with the opportunity to participate in the research and development of its "Models and Guidelines for Partnerships in Education." Frequently, research and development outcomes escape the review, critique, and input from practitioners before being translated into programs and other activities directed toward those same practitioners. As such, an important phase in the transition from research to practice is omitted.

Project WISE has sought to help close the gap between research and practice and, in effect, has helped increase the relevance and applicability of its products. By doing so, this has led to practitioners' becoming an integral part in the process of developing materials and procedures for their own use or benefit. The outcome is that they are also likely to become more motivated to take part in educational efforts for which there is a shared role in the conceptionalizing and planning process.

In addition, Liaison Team meetings have allowed members opportunities for (1) sharing their perceptions, (2) refining their goals, (3) providing content clarity, (4) enhancing activity viability, (5) influencing implementation processes, (6) determining evaluation procedures, and (7) strengthening appropriate follow-up with respect to collaborative staff development/inservice training efforts and materials. Project outcomes have, as a result, become far more useful and effective for intended audiences because representatives of those audiences were involved in all stages of development. Finally, the liaison team approach has been significant because it has provided a collaborative method for pursuing the study of collaboration between schools and business/community partners.

B. The Project WISE Data Base On Educational Partnerships

Increasing attention on collaboration between public schools and the private sector to enhance school effectiveness requires more information about how such collaboration should be planned, developed, implemented, and assessed. This need is compounded by the SEDL region's rapid influx of population and new business as well as by the nation-wide intensification of efforts to improve education. To meet this need, Project WISE staff have produced a significant data base on school-community partnerships. The data base is a collection of information obtained from Liaison Team members at the six sites, a literature review, and from other school-community partnership projects at sites throughout the nation. Further, it has been used to develop and refine the Project's Models and Guidelines and will be enlarged then used increasingly as an important resource for SEDL work in 1986 or beyond.

The data base has grown during the course of the Project and, in the process, has emerged as not only a central resource for Project staff and participants, but also has become unique nationally in its size, scope, and the quality of its contents. To the best of staff knowledge, no other such comprehensive data base on the subject of school-community partnerships exists.

C. Aid for Disadvantaged Youth

Furthermore, the Models and Guidelines can be used to institute much needed partnerships, such as those necessary to aid economically or educationally disadvantaged youth. This is a population that a

three-year study, now under way, indicates is not being served nearly in proportion to its need. Reported in Public/Private Venture News (Fall, 1985), the study, now in its first year, is funded by the Edna McConnell Clark Foundation, IBM, the Pew Memorial Trust, the Exxon Education Fund, and the Rockefeller Foundation.

Despite earlier use of partnerships (such as the Dallas Adopt-a-School in the 1960's), to date, the Public/Private Venture study has found that school-business collaborations actually tend to avoid targeting the most at-risk youth. They also tend to be urban phenomena, to perceive business as a donor and schools as receivers, to involve service industries characterized by high turnover and many clerical positions, and to enroll a disproportionate number of young women. The study is also finding that most private-sector activity with schools occurs in terms of contributions of money, and that is primarily to post-secondary institutions.

Valuable research such as this study is increasingly pointing out the gaps in collaborative arrangements and revealing patterns in their structures, goals, and activities. As knowledge increases about what needs are remaining unmet, more collaborations can be expected to form to meet these needs. The Project WISE Models and Guidelines are now available to serve those efforts.

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